

S.J.U. EDU 7901 Advanced Research and Design – Course Synthesis, Spring 2012

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*Advanced Research and Design* took us on the journey from the outside to the inside. Prof. Taylor-Dunlop helped us to utilize the tools we have gathered in our prior coursework and apply it to our own dissertation outlines. In our prior courses, we applied theorist to the research questions of others. This course enabled us to take the monumental step towards developing our own research questions and adopting a theoretical framework to help us navigate our own questions.

We began the course by reviewing the essential parts of the first three chapters of a dissertation outline. We then methodically unpacked each chapter in a detailed fashion. Finally we tried our hand at developing a problem statement and subsequent research questions. This proved to be much more difficult than it appeared at first. The old adage “the most important thing in life is to learn to ask the right questions,” was never more apropos.

The collaboration within the cohort was most useful. We each shared our problem statements and research questions and offered constructive criticism. We learned so much by helping each other.

The next part of the journey was to adopt a theoretical framework within which we could research our problem statements. Once again we began by reviewing the essential elements of a chapter two and then attempted to apply this knowledge to our own problem statements. The collaboration within the cohort continued to be of great service. This same method was utilized as we journeyed through chapter three.

In the end, we learned how to complete a three chapter dissertation outline. This has been useful in defending our digital portfolios and moving forward towards defending our research topics.

In this course, Dr. Dunlop provided useful information in order to enhance our understanding of the research project and to hone our ability to design either a quantitative or qualitative study.

The true value of a cohort model came through in this course as we all presented our topics and research questions, and our colleagues gave invaluable feedback. This feedback helped us plan, design and develop our research topic. During the two weekends we were able to come together to outline the framework that we hope will become our dissertation topics.

The textbook for this course was *Practical Research: Planning and Design* by Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ormond. We analyzed the book in its entirety and it is a masterpiece in the guidance of the dissertation writing process. It outlines in a clear and concise process every part of the dissertation process. Topics such as writing the literature review, defining the statement of the problem and the limitation of the study and research methodology are explained in detail, with examples from published dissertations.